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ABSTRACT

The American economy faces many problems today--declining productivity, the major one. A major cause of America's economic downturn has been excessive government intervention in the economy, along with excessive government spending and taxation. President Reagan's economic programs promise an assault on this excessive regulation, as well as spending cuts and tax reductions to spur the private sector. Historically, vocational education has played an important role in response to the changing educational and economic needs of the nation, and it will continue to meet these challenges in the 1980s. Some of the ways vocational education contributes to the economy are by such programs as cooperative vocational education, linking school to work, and collaboration among business, industry, and the education system. Many vocational educators now actively work with state and local development agencies, private sector employers, and other educational and community-based organizations to expand job opportunities within their communities. One very successful example of such action by vocational educators is in the community of Staples, Minnesota. The U.S. Department of Education also contributes to the link between vocational education and economic development by conducting studies promoting such linkages, and encouraging such things as entrepreneurship education. Also, through information networks, vocational educators can keep abreast of latest developments and increase their own productivity. Economic development is a priority in the reauthorization of the Vocational Education Act. (KC)

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NATIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: THE MAJOR RATIONALE FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN THE 1980's

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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

GOOD MORNING.

IT IS A PLEASURE TO BE WITH YOU TODAY AT THIS DISSEMINATION WORKSHOP ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IS A CONCEPT WHICH IS BEING EXAMINED AND DISCUSSED THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY; IT IS A MAJOR CONCERN OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE, AND IT IS A PRIMARY CONERN OF THIS ADMINISTRATION. YOU ARE A VERY SPECIAL GROUP OF PEOPLE WHO WILL HAVE MUCH TO DO WITH THE CONTRIBUTION OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN THE 1980's. I THINK THAT CONTRIBUTION CAN BE SUBSTANTIAL. TODAY, I WOULD LIKE TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT THE PRESENT ECONOMIC SITUATION, PRESIDENT REAGAN'S PROGRAM FOR ECONOMIC RECOVERY, AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION'S ROLE IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

FOR THE MOST OF THE 20TH CENTURY, THE UNITED STATES WAS THE ECONOMIC GIANT OF THE WORLD. ITS ENORMOUS PRODUCTIVE CAPACITY WAS TAKEN FOR GRANTED; IT WAS ASSUMED THAT THE ECONOMY WOULD CONTINUE TO PROGRESS, PROVIDING A HIGHER STANDARD OF LIVING FOR EVERYONE. THE DECADE OF THE 1970's SAW THIS SERENE OPTIMISM SHATTERED AS THE UNITED STATES WAS BESET BY A HOST OF ECONOMIC ILLS: HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT, INFLATION, A DETERIORATING BALANCE OF TRADE, AND DECLINING ECONOMIC GROWTH. WHILE THE SEEDS OF AMERICAN ECONOMIC DECAY WERE IMPLANTED YEARS AGO, ITS APPEARANCE HAS BEEN STARTINGLY SUDDEN. AS LATE AS 1972, THE UNITED STATES' STANDARD OF LIVING WAS THE HIGHEST IN THE WORLD; PRESENTLY, IT RANKS FIFTH. FROM 1950 TO 1965 PRODUCTIVITY PER WORKER IN THE UNITED STATES INCREASED AT AN AVERAGE ANNUAL RATE OF 2.4 PERCENT. FROM 1965 TO 1973 THIS YEARLY RATE OF INCREASE DECLINED TO 1.6 PERCENT AND FROM 1973 TO 1978 IT PLUMMETED FURTHER TO A MEAGER 0.4 PERCENT. AMERICAN WORKER'S ARE NOW ONLY THE FIFTH HIGHEST PAID IN THE WESTERN WORLD. AMERICAN'S ANNUAL REAL ECONOMIC GROWTH RATE, WHICH AVERAGED A HEALTHY 4.1 PERCENT DURING THE

DECADE OF THE 1960's, HAS NOW BECOME MINIMAL. IN 1963, AMERICAN BUSINESS COMMANDED 40 PERCENT OF THE WORLD EXPORT MARKET; TODAY IT HAS A DIFFICULT TIME COMPETING WITH FOREIGN PRODUCED GOODS AT HOME.

AS A RESULT OF AMERICA'S LONG TERM ECONOMIC PROBLEMS, THERE HAS EMERGED A NEW CONCERN WITH THE QUESTION OF HOW WEALTH IS PRODUCED. THIS CONCERN WITH PRODUCING WEALTH REPRESENTS A CONSIDERABLE CHANGE IN THINKING. DURING AMERICA's AGE OF PROSPERITY, THE ISSUE THAT ABSORBED THE ATTENTION OF POLITICAL THINKERS WAS NOT THE STIMULATION OF WEALTH, BUT HOW BETTER TO DIVIDE IT UP SO THOSE AT THE BOTTOM WOULD GET A LARGER SHARE. THIS GOAL CALLED FOR MYRIADS OF PROGRAMS TO REGULATE THE ECONOMY. NOW IT IS APPARENT THAT MANY OF THESE POLICIES, AIMED AT THE REDISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH, HAVE HAD A DETRIMENTAL EFFECT ON THE CREATION OF WEALTH AND HAVE BEEN ESPECIALLY HARMFUL TO THE POOR.

A MAJOR CAUSE OF AMERICA'S ECONOMIC DOWNTURN HAS BEEN EXCESSIVE GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION IN THE ECONOMY. AMONG ECONOMISTS AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC, A STRONG CONSENSUS HAS EMERGED THAT GOVERNMENT MUST REDUCE THIS INTERVENTION. IT IS ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO STUDY THE IMPACT OF BURDENSOME AND DUPLICATIVE REGULATIONS ON THE ECONOMY, FOR EXAMPLE, WITHOUT ADVOCATING DRASTIC REFORM. AND IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO ANALYZE GOVERNMENT SPENDING AND TAXATION WITHOUT CONCLUDING THAT REDUCTION ARE OF PARAMOUNT IMPORTANCE.

PRESIDENT REAGAN's ECONOMIC PROGRAMS PROMISE A FRONTAL ASSAULT ON THIS EXCESSIVE REGULATION AND AIMS AT UNLEASHING THE VAST POTENTIAL POWER OF THE AMERICAN PRIVATE SECTOR. PRESIDENT REAGAN'S BUDGET CUTS ARE FOCUSED ON THE NEED TO ELIMINATE ADDITIONAL GOVERNMENT DEFICIT FINANCING. DEFICIT SPENDING HAS REQUIRED THE GOVERNMENT TO BORROW HEAVILY FROM THE PUBLIC, DIMINISHING THE FUNDS AVAILABLE FOR THE PRIVATE CAPITAL FORMATION ESSENTIAL FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH.

(THE PROBLEMS FACED BY THE SAVINGS & LOAN INDUSTRY TODAY ARE A PROMINENT CASE IN POINT). FURTHERMORE, DEFICIT FINANCING INEVITABLY LEADS TO AN EXPANSION OF THE MONEY SUPPLY, WHICH HAS BROUGHT ON OUR HIGH RATE OF INFLATION. INFLATION INHIBITS ECONOMIC PRODUCTION IN A NUMBER OF WAYS. FOR INSTANCE, INFLATION HAS DRASTICALLY EATEN AWAY SAVINGS, WHICH IN 1979 DROPPED TO A 30-YEAR LOW OF 3.3. PERCENT OF PERSONAL INCOME, THUS REDUCING THE FUNDS AVAILABLE FOR INVESTMENT. THIS 3.3. PERCENT COMPARES WITH SAVINGS RATES OF 15 PERCENT IN WEST GERMANY AND 25 PERCENT IN JAPAN. INFLATION HAS ALSO INCREASED ECONOMIC UNCERTAINTY, CAUSING A DECREASED LEVEL OF LONG-TERM INVESTMENT WHICH IS THE MOVING FORCE FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH. AND BY PUSHING EVERYONE INTO HIGHER TAX BRACKETS, INFLATION HAS REDUCED THE INCENTIVES TO PRODUCE AND INVEST.

IN LINE WITH PRESIDENT REAGAN'S EFFORT TO INCREASE THE INCENTIVE TO PRODUCE AND INVEST IS HIS INITIATIVE TO REDUCE TAX RATES.

A WHOLE NEW SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS, CALLED SUPPLY-SIDE ECONOMICS, HAS EVOLVED AROUND THE CENTRAL CONCEPT THAT IN ORDER FOR ONE TO PRODUCE ONE MUST BE REWARDED; IF ONE IS NOT REWARDED ONE WILL NOT PRODUCE. OBVIOUSLY, THIS IS NOT A NEW CONCEPT--IT IS MERELY COMMON SENSE--BUT IT BECAME IGNORED BY ECONOMISTS AND POLITICANS IN OUR ERA OF PROSPERITY.

THE FINAL PART OF THE REAGAN PROGRAM TO REGAIN ECONOMIC MOMENTUM IS THE NEED TO RELAX DIRECT GOVERNMENT REGULATION OF BUSINESS. MANY OF THE REGULATIONS ARE INTENDED TO DEAL WITH REAL PROBLEMS: POLLUTION, DISCRIMINATION, ECOLOGY, UNSAFE PRODUCTS, AND UNHEALTHY WORKING CONDITIONS. BUT THE DIRECT COSTS ATTRIBUTABLE TO THESE REGULATIONS HAVE BEEN ESTIMATED TO EXCEED $100 BILLION. AND THIS FIGURE ONLY INCLUDES THE COSTS OF OPERATING THE REGULATORY FACILITIES AND THE COSTS TO BUSINESS OF COMPLYING WITH THE REGULATIONS; IT DOES NOT INCLUDE THE MUCH MORE HARMFUL LONG-TERM EFFECTS THE REGULATIONS HAVE HAD ON BUSINESS RESEARCH, INNOVATION, AND GROWTH.

SMALL BUSINESS WHICH TRADITIONALLY HAS BEEN THE MOST INNOVATIVE SEGMENT OF THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY HAS BEEN THE MOST HARD HIT BY THE REGULATORY PROCESS. IN PART, THIS IS BECAUSE IT HAS BEEN UNABLE TO MAINTAIN A TRAINED TECHNICAL STAFF ASSIGNED SPECIFICALLY TO DEAL WITH GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS. TO STATE THAT GOVERNMENT MUST RELAX ITS REGULATION OF BUSINESS DOES NOT MEAN THAT IT WILL REFRAIN FROM DOING ANYTHING TO ACHIEVE A CLEANER ENVIRONMENT, A SAFER WORK PLACE OR OTHER VITAL SOCIAL OBJECTIVES. RATHER, GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS MUST BEGIN TO CONSIDER THE GREAT COSTS OF THOSE REGULATIONS AND CEASE EXTENDING SUCH REGULATIONS BEYOND THE POINT WHERE BENEFITS EQUAL COSTS.

HAVING DISCUSSED SOME OF THE PROBLEMS FACING OUR ECONOMY AND SOME OF THE PRESIDENT'S PROPOSED SOLUTIONS, I WOULD LIKE TO TURN TO VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN THIS CONTEXT.

HISTORICALLY, VOCATIONAL EDUCATION HAS PLAYED AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN RESPONSE TO THE CHANGING EDUCATIONAL AND ECONOMIC NEEDS OF THE CITIZENS AND THE NATION. IN THE 1980's, VOCATIONAL EDUCATION WILL FACE A MOST CHALLENGING AND EXCITING DECADE.

MANY OF THE TRENDS WHICH HAVE ALREADY BEEN OBSERVED WILL ACCELERATE. AMONG THEM ARE:

- o THE ADVENT OF HIGH TECHNOLOGY AND THE NEED FOR HIGHLY SKILLED WORKERS
- o A CONTINUATION OF THE SHIFT FROM LABOR INTENSIVE TO CAPITAL INTENSIVE PRODUCTION METHODS
- o THE INCREASINGLY FREQUENT NEED FOR SKILL UPDATING AND JOB RETRAINING
- o THE AGING OF THE POPULATION AT LARGE AND THE WORKFORCE IN PARTICULAR
- o THE REEMPHASIS OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP THAT HAS ACCOMPANIED THE RECOGNITION THAT SMALL BUSINESSES ARE THE GREATEST JOB CREATORS AS

WELL AS MAJOR SOURCES OF INNOVATION IN THIS COUNTRY.

FACING THESE CHALLENGES WILL PROVIDE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION WITH TREMENDOUS OPPORTUNITIES. I AM OPTIMISTIC BECAUSE I FEEL THAT THE DELIVERY SYSTEMS NEEDED TO COPE WITH THESE CHALLENGES ARE ALREADY IN PLACE. THIS WILL BE AN ERA IN WHICH VOCATIONAL EDUCATORS WILL EXPAND EFFORTS IN AREAS WHERE THEY HAVE BEEN WORKING ALREADY.

EXAMPLES:

LINKING SCHOOL AND WORK IS A FAMILIAR--AND INTEGRAL--PART OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION. A GOOD EXAMPLE IS THE CO-OPERATIVE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAM, ONE OF THE OLDEST METHODS OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION WHEREBY STUDENTS DIVIDE THEIR TIME BETWEEN CLASSROOMS AND A RELATED JOB. IT PROVIDES ALMOST IMMEDIATE APPLICATION OF LEARNING IN A WORK ENVIRONMENT. SUCH PROGRAMS HAVE ALWAYS MADE GOOD SENSE. THEY WILL BE EVEN MORE IMPORTANT IN THE 80's.

CLOSE COMMUNITY RELATIONS ARE NECESSARY--AND ENHANCED--AS SCHOOLS PREPARE STUDENTS THROUGH ON-THE-JOB TRAINING IN COMMUNITY WORKSITES.

COLLABORATION AMONG BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY, LABOR, AND EDUCATION HAS MANY BENEFITS FOR ALL CONCERNED. FOR ALMOST A DECADE, THE OFFICE AND NOW THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION HAS WORKED TO STIMULATE AND COORDINATE DIALOGUE AND COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE BUSINESS AND INDUSTRIAL COMMUNITY, LABOR LEADERS, ALL LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT, AND THE SCHOOLS.

THIS COLLABORATION CREATES A PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE COMMUNITY AND THE CLASSROOM. EDUCATION-WORK COUNCILS HAVE BEEN SET UP TO ASSIST YOUTHS IN THE TRANSITION FROM SCHOOL TO WORK. MOREOVER, TODAY WE ALSO NEED TO BE CONCERNED WITH THE WORK-TO-EDUCATION TRANSITION OF ADULTS. AS A RESULT, GROWING NUMBERS OF EDUCATORS AND OTHER COMMUNITY, STATE, AND NATIONAL LEADERS ARE FINDING IMPORTANT BENEFITS FROM COLLABORATION. SCHOOLS ARE INCREASINGLY BEING RECOGNIZED AS CONTRIBUTORS TO THE ECONOMIC WELL-BEING

OF THE COMMUNITY, THE STATE, AND THE NATION AS A WHOLE.

MANY EDUCATORS NOW ACTIVELY WORK WITH THE STATE AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES, PRIVATE SECTOR EMPLOYERS, AND OTHER EDUCATIONAL AND COMMUNITY BASED ORGANIZATIONS TO EXPAND JOB OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN THEIR COMMUNITIES. BY PROVIDING THE POOL OF SKILLED WORKERS, VOCATIONAL EDUCATION CAN BE INSTRUMENTAL IN EXPANDING EXISTING BUSINESSES AND ATTRACTING NEW INDUSTRIES TO AN AREA -- THEREBY ENHANCING THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

THIS WORKSHOP WILL FOCUS ON INNOVATIVE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PROGAMS THAT SET THE PACE FOR ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN COORDINATION WITH OTHER AGENCIES. HOWEVER, I WOULD LIKE TO DISCUSS ONE EXAMPLE, LOCATED BY THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR RESEARCH IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION, WHICH I FEEL DEMONSTRATES THE LEADERSHIP WHICH A FAR SIGHTED VOCATIONAL EDUCATOR CAN PROVIDE.

THE VOCATIONAL SCHOOL AT STAPLES, MINNESOTA, DEMONSTRATES THE ROLE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION CAN PLAY IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. THE CASUAL OBSERVER, YEARS AGO, WOULD HAVE MARKED STAPES AS A TOWN DESTINED FOR DECAY. THE RAILROAD, WHICH HAD PROVIDED A JOB BASE FOR MANY OF ITS INHABITANTS CLOSED DOWN A MAJOR BASE OF OPERATION. AGRICULTURE, THE BASIS FOR MOST OF THE REST OF THE ECONOMY, WAS AT BEST, MARGINAL. BUT THE CASUAL OBSERVER WOULD HAVE MISSED THE VISION AND SENSE OF COMMUNITY OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS. HE SENSED WHAT COULD BE. IF AGRICULTURE WAS A BASIS FOR THE REMAINING ECONOMY, THEN PROGRAMS IN VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE AT THE SECONDARY, POSTSECONDARY, AND ADULT LEVELS COULD ADD TO THE SOUNDNESS OF THAT BASE. EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY IN MANAGEMENT AND TECHNOLOGY IN AGRICULTURE WAS ADVANCED BY ADDING TO THE INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF UNTIL IT WAS ADEQUATE TO SERVE THE NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY. BUT THE VISION DID NOT STOP THERE.

HE AGAIN ASKED THE IMPORTANT QUESTION OF WHAT COULD BE? THE MARGINAL CHARACTER OF THE LAND COULD BE IMPROVED IF ONE COULD SUPPLY THE MISSING INGREDIENT--WATER. BUT USING WATER REQUIRES PEOPLE WHO ARE SKILLED IN IRRIGATING. THUS A SPECIAL TRAINING PROGRAM TO TRAIN IRRIGATION TECHNICIANS WAS DEVELOPED WITH TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES FOR BOTH YOUTH AND ADULTS. IRRIGATING IN THE SUPERINTENDENT'S COMMUNITY REQUIRES WELLS. A PROGRAM WAS INITIATED TO TRAIN WELL DIRLLERS.

TO ASSUME THAT THE ONLY JOB CREATING EFFECT OF THIS CHAIN OF EVENTS WAS THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE WATER MANAGEMENT SKILLS OF FARMERS AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF WELL DRILLING ENTREPRENEURS IS A SHORT-SIGHTED VIEW. THE INCREASED PRODUCTIVITY OF THE AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES PROMPTED A LONG CHAIN OF INTERRELATED EVENTS. MORE WATER GENERATED THE NEED FOR MORE MATERIALS FOR THE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCATION PROCESS--SEEDS, FERTILIZERS, CHEMICALS, MACHINES, TECHNICIANS.

INCREASED PRODUCTIVITY EXPANDED THE MARKETING DIMENSIONS--MORE TRANS-PORTATION, MORE STORAGE. EACH SERVICE OF GOODS REQUIRED PEOPLE. THE GENERAL INCREASE IN THE AFFLUENCE OF FARMERS AND THE CONVEYORS OF RELATED GOODS AND SERVICES AFFECTED THE TOTAL COMMUNITY. THE MULTIPLIER EFFECT OF THE NEW INCOME HELPED TO TRANSFORM THE TOWN AND THE COUNTRYSIDE INTO A THRIVING ECONOMY.

SUCCESS STORIES SUCH AS THIS ABOUND IN MANY STATES, BUT AS WE FACE THE 1980s THERE IS A NEED FOR EVEN GREATER EMPHASIS ON AND COMMITMENT TO USING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AS A TOOL FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. IN THIS REGARD, THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION THROUGH THE OFFICE OF VOCATIONAL AND ADULT EDUCATION (OVAE), HAS FUNDED SEVERAL PROGRAMS OF NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE. THE AVA STUDY TO IDENTIFY AND PROMOTE LINKAGE BETWEEN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND JOB CREATION/DEVELOPMENT IS ONE.

ANOTHER PROJECT "DEVELOPMENT OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP TRAINING COMPONENTS FOR

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION" OFFERS PROMISE FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION'S PARTICIPATION IN ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT. BENEFITS OF ENTREPRENEUSHIP TRAINING INCLUDE CREATION OF NEW ENTERPRISES WITH LOCAL LEADERSHIP, CREATION OF NEW JOBS, STIMULATION OF INVESTMENTS, AND THE GENERATION OF LOCAL PRIDE AND ENTHUSIASM.

THROUGH A WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, OVAE IS PARTICIPATING IN THE SPONSORSHIP OF TWO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RELATED PROJECTS IN RURAL AMERICA. "EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FOR VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE TEACHERS AND TEACHER EDUCATORS", IS DESIGNED TO PREPARE VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE TEACHER EDUCATORS TO INFUSE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CONCEPTS INTO THEIR CURRICULA AND TO DEVELOP CURRICULA WHICH ADDRESS THE NEEDS FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN RURAL COMMUNITIES. A "LINKING EDUCATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN RURAL AMERICA" PROJECT WILL FOCUS ON DETERMINING RURAL WORKFORCE NEEDS AND ON BUILDING LINKS BETWEEN

EDUCATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SERVICES AND AGENCIES TO MEET THOSE WORKFORCE NEEDS.

THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR RESEARCH IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IS ALSO VERY MUCH A PART OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS. THE CENTER IS CURRENTLY CONDUCTING 18 DIFFERENT PROJECTS IN THIS AREA. THESE PROJECTS RANGE FROM THE DEVELOPMENT OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP TRAINING PACKAGES TO WORKING WITH THE NATIONAL CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION.

FINALLY, THROUGH VARIOUS INFORMATION SHARING NETWORKS (SUCH AS THE NATIONAL NETWORK FOR CURRICULUM COORDINATION) PROJECTS WHICH HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED AT THE FEDERAL, STATE, OR LOCAL LEVELS ARE DISSEMINATED THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY. THERE IS NOT NEED TO RE-INVENT THE WHEEL, AS WE ARE SO FOND OF SAYING. THE SUCCESS STORIES IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION ARE INCREASINGLY AVAILABLE TO ANY VOCATIONAL EDUCATOR WHO WANTS TO STUDY THEM.

INCREASED USE OF THESE NETWORKS IS A MAJOR MEANS OF INCREASING THE PRODUCTIVITY OF THE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION ENTERPRISE.

AT THIS POINT, I WOULD LIKE TO SAY A FEW WORDS ABOUT THE UPCOMING REAUTHORIZATION OF THE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION ACT. AS I MENTIONED BEFORE, THIS ADMINISTRATION IS COMMITTED TO REDUCING FEDERAL REGULATION AND INTRUSION. THIS PROCESS HAS ALREADY BEGUN IN THE ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY CONSOLIDATION PROPOSALS. IT WILL CONTINUE IN THE VEA REAUTHORIZATION PROPOSAL.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IS A PRIORITY IN THE OFFICE OF VOCATIONAL AND ADULT EDUCATION. THE REAUTHORIZATION EFFORT WILL GIVE US A CHANCE TO PLACE EVEN GREATER EMPHASIS IN THIS AREA. ONE OBVIOUS METHOD WOULD BE TO PROVIDE SUPPORT FOR PROGRAMS, SERVICES, AND ACTIVITIES WHICH WILL SPECIFICALLY PROMOTE AND ACHIEVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND WHICH WILL CONTRIBUTE TO THE SOLUTION OF MAJOR NATIONAL PROBLEMS BY INSURING ADEQUATE SUPPLIES OF SKILLED

WORKERS AND TECHNICIANS IN THESE PROBLEM AREAS. (FOR EXAMPLE, VOCATIONAL EDUCATION CAN PLAY A SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN THE REVITALIZATION OF THE DEFENSE-INDUSTRIAL BASE).

GIVEN THIS RATIONAL FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION, I SEE THE FEDERAL ROLE AS ONE OF HELPING THE STATES MEET THE NEW CHALLENGES OF THE 1980's. THE OFFICE OF VOCATIONAL AND ADULT EDUCATION CAN PROVIDE LEADERSHIP IN THE AREAS OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT, AND THE DISSEMINATION OF IDEAS THAT WORK. THESE FUNCTIONS CAN BE PERFORMED SUCCESSFULLY ONLY IF THE FEDERAL STAFF, THE STATE AGENCIES, AND LOCAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATORS COLLABORATE AS A TEAM. THE OFFICE OF VOCATIONAL AND ADULT EDUCATION CAN PROVIDE LEADERSHIP IN HELPING TO DETERMINE WHAT THE NEW DIRECTIONS OF THE 1980's WILL AFFECT US. BUT THIS WILL BE DONE WITH THE RECOGNITION THAT IT IS AT THE STATE AND LOCAL LEVELS THAT SPECIFIC PROBLEMS CAN BE EFFECTIVELY IDENTIFIED AND ADDRESSED.

IT HAS BEEN A PLEASURE TO BE WITH YOU TODAY. I HOPE THAT YOU WILL SHARE MY OPTIMISIM ABOUT THE RCLE OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AS YOU CONSIDER THE INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS WHICH WILL BE PRESENTED AT THIS WORKSHOP.